



Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee  
Additional Estimates 2025–26  
Monday, 9 February 2026  
Daily summary

The committee met from 9.00am until 10.45pm.

The committee called the Department Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts Portfolio, discussing the following topics:

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts**

Corporate matters

- Office leases and fit-outs;
- Artificial intelligence plan for the Australian Public Service;
- Staff WHS and flexible working arrangements; and
- Hot-desking and other office arrangements.

Outcome 1 – Improved infrastructure across Australia through investment in and coordination of transport and other infrastructure

- Updates on road infrastructure projects by state: New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia;
- Sydney to Newcastle high speed rail; and
- Infrastructure projects affecting Western Sydney Airport.

Outcome 2 – An efficient, sustainable, competitive, safe and secure transport system for all transport users through regulation, financial assistance and safety investigations

- Voluntary administration and sale of Rex Airlines;
- Road safety programs;
- Melbourne Airport third runway;
- Importation and safety of e-bikes;
- Sydney to Canberra railway services;
- Development and use of a Maritime Single Window digital platform;
- Brisbane Airport Preliminary Draft 2026 Master Plan;
- Self-driving technology within Australia;
- National Vehicle Efficiency Standard;
- Road User Charging Taskforce;
- Road fatalities;
- Potential privatisation of Airservices Australia's firefighting and rescue equipment and infrastructure;
- Government response to the Senate Select Committee on Commonwealth Bilateral Air Service Agreements;
- Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme and Bass Strait Passenger Vehicle Equalisation Scheme;
- Blackspot programs;
- Western Sydney Airport;
- Increased insolvency in trucking transport, postal and warehousing sector;
- Sham contracting in the trucking sector; and

- Sick leave days at airports.

Outcome 3 – Strengthening the sustainability, capacity and diversity of Australia’s urban and regional areas including northern Australia, including through facilitating local partnerships between all levels of government and local communities; through investment in infrastructure and measures that stimulate economic growth; and providing grants and financial assistance

- Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program;
- Growing Regions funding;
- Urban Precincts and Partnerships Program;
- Thriving Suburbs Program; and
- Office of Northern Australia.

Outcome 4 – Good governance and service delivery in the Australian territories including through the maintenance and improvement of the laws and services for non-self-governing territories, and the overarching legislative framework for self-governing territories

- Bruce precinct Master Plan;
- Canberra Convention Centre;
- Canberra Aquatic Centre; and
- Residential aged care facility on Norfolk Island.

## **Portfolio agencies**

### Airservices Australia

- Aviation rescue and firefighting services;
- Instrument landing systems at Townsville Airport;
- Proposed strategic partnership with a sovereign wealth fund for firefighting infrastructure;
- Emergency response capability;
- Engagement with PricewaterhouseCoopers
- Aviation charging (landing fees); and
- Flight disruptions and staffing levels.

### Civil Aviation Safety Authority

- Fair Work Commission decisions; and
- Memorandum of understanding with the Australian Space Agency.

### Western Sydney Airport Corporation

- Timeline for the commencement of operations;
- Planned airline operations;
- Visits to the airport during construction; and
- Aviation Attraction Fund.

### Infrastructure Australia

- Recommended emissions values; and
- Cost-benefit ratios of numerous infrastructure projects.

### Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility

- Mahalo Gas Project;
- Government support for coal and gas projects; and
- 2024 Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility Act Review.

#### Australian Rail Track Corporation and Inland Rail

- Contract with the Whyalla Steelworks;
- Assessment of the Gladstone to Toowoomba route; and
- Upgrades to rail corridors in Victoria and Queensland.

#### High Speed Rail Authority

- Business case for the Sydney to Newcastle route.

#### National Heavy Vehicle Regulator

- Mutual recognition of international licenses;
- Road vehicle fatalities by state; and
- Fitness for work requirements.

#### National Transport Commission

- Consultation for changes to heavy vehicle charges.

#### National Capital Authority

- Hume Circle upgrades;
- Amendments to the National Capital Plan;
- Commonwealth Bridge upgrades; and
- Relocation of Civic Pool to Commonwealth Park.

The committee released the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and the National Intermodal Corporation without questions.

The committee will resume its examination of the 2025-26 Additional Estimates with the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio at 9:00am on Tuesday, 10 February 2026.

Please contact the secretariat on (02) 6277 3511 or [rrat.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:rrat.sen@aph.gov.au) if you have any questions.